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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/208 of 21 December 2001. It responds to issues in the resolution dealing with the strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation, the systematic utilization of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research by United Nations funds and programmes and the strengthening of the Institute's financial status. A report providing clarifications and proposals concerning rental rates and maintenance costs charged to the Institute, has been issued separately in document A/57/479.

* The delayed submission of the present report was due to the consultations required on the format and contents of the two reports submitted under resolution 56/208.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/208 of 21 December 2001 on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The principal issues addressed in the resolution were the strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation, the systematic utilization of UNITAR by United Nations funds and programmes, the strengthening of the Institute's financial status and the rental rates and maintenance costs of UNITAR premises.

II. Improving institutional cooperation and partnerships

2. As detailed in the report of activities covering the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2002,[1] submitted by the Executive Director of UNITAR, the programmes have remained steady and sustained. Some 225 different programmes, seminars and workshops have been organized throughout the world. Close to 11,500 participants have now benefited from UNITAR training and capacity-building activities during the period under review.

3. UNITAR activities remain focused on project delivery and can be presented under three different clusters:

- Training in multilateral diplomacy and international affairs management, including the New York office
- Training and capacity-building programmes in the fields of economic and social development
- Research on and for training, including needs assessment, impact evaluation and skills and knowledge creation and sharing.

4. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of resolution 56/208 stress the need to develop further partnerships, in particular at the country level. In this regard, the network of partnerships has been strengthened and is being progressively extended. This network includes academic and training centres in industrialized and developing countries, facilitating the selection of participants and the coordination of follow-up measures and heightening the efficiency of the general management of training activities. Several of these regional or national partner institutions are now sharing the costs of the programmes with UNITAR. The identification of competent resource persons in the country or region in question has also been greatly facilitated.

5. The collaboration with the departments, funds and programmes of the Organization has also developed satisfactorily. Many joint ventures have recently been launched at the country level with United Nations resident coordinators. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is funding some of these projects. Cooperation with agencies of the United Nations system on specific training and capacity-building aspects has also developed substantially during the recent past. These collaborations take several forms, such as co-sponsorship with one or more organization from within and outside the United Nations system, bilateral programmes and exchange of senior staff acting as resource persons. In fact, the majority of UNITAR programmes are common ventures with one or several partners.

6. Over the last two years, UNITAR has developed successful partnerships in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration. In collaboration with UNITAR, transnational corporations from France, Germany and the United States of America have developed public-private partnerships for training in the fields of new information and communication technologies, environmental management, finance and access to essential resources. The corporations concerned, such as Vivendi Environment, are members of the "global compact" established by the Secretary-General. These partnerships should develop further in the years to come and attract other private partners from different countries and in various specialized areas.

7. Partnerships have also increased in the area of research on and for training. This applied research mainly comprises the conceptualization and design of innovative training methodologies, such as self-needs assessment techniques, impact evaluation as a tool to increase the efficiency of action, reflection on creation and sharing of action-derived knowledge and development and establishment of an e-learning platform. Collaboration has been developed with specialized centres and faculties in Member States, as well as with various United Nations bodies, including the Global Environment Facility, the executive secretariats of various environmental conventions, the Economic Commission for Europe, the joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and several UNDP field offices. To provide and share such services is a natural extension of the UNITAR global mandate as decided by the General Assembly.

8. In paragraph 9 of its resolution 56/208, the General Assembly encourages the diversification of the venues of the training programmes to include the cities hosting regional commissions of the United Nations. Unfortunately, this has not been possible owing to the insufficient level of the voluntary contributions to the General Fund, which covers such expenses. Training programmes at the headquarters of regional commissions would certainly answer a need, but existing means are insufficient to consider these for the time being.

Systematic utilization of the Institute by the United Nations

9. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 56/208, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Institute and United Nations funds and programmes, to continue to explore ways and means of systematically utilizing the Institute in the execution of training and capacity-building programmes for the economic and social development of developing countries.

10. Good progress has been made in this direction over the past two years at four different levels. The various forms of joint ventures mentioned under paragraph 5 of the present report represent concrete examples of utilizing the services and expertise of UNITAR.

11. UNITAR is developing activities conducted for and in cooperation with departments at Headquarters, in particular the Department for Peacekeeping Operations. With a grant from the United Nations Foundation for International Partnerships, UNITAR has prepared a training programme for civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations on the special needs of women and children in conflict. Moreover, UNITAR is continuing its debriefing and lessons learned on peacekeeping operations, namely, the high-level conference series, in which the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and several other United Nations bodies are

participating. The last two conferences, organized by UNITAR, the Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, and the Japan Institute of International Affairs, dealt with the reform process of United Nations peacekeeping operations, in 2001, and on the Debriefing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in East Timor (UNTAET), in 2002. The reports and recommendations of the conferences are submitted for the attention of the Secretary-General and are later published. Finally, within its training programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, UNITAR, in close consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and several other United Nations programmes, has launched a two-year programme for briefing and debriefing special and personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General.

12. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, has given good visibility to UNITAR. The United Nations Secretariat provided valuable assistance to the Institute. UNITAR was very active in the negotiations for the so-called Type II partnership initiative, which fits within the Institute's modus operandi, namely the design of concrete projects to answer precise needs, conducted in full cooperation with institutions from within and outside the United Nations system.

13. Finally, UNITAR has also been requested to participate in the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society. The Executive Director has been appointed as a member of the High-level Summit Organizing Committee and the Institute has been given the task of helping least developed countries prepare themselves for the Summit.

Strengthening the financial status

14. Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of resolution 56/208 refer to the necessity of broadening the donor base of the Institute and increasing the level of voluntary contributions made to the General Fund. Owing to the very stringent management of funds and administration, the financial situation of UNITAR has become positive. The Special Purpose Grants are reaching a satisfactory level, although the non-earmarked contributions remain low. The fragility of the General Fund is worrying since it barely covers the training programmes conducted in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna. This situation unfortunately prevents the Institute from answering the numerous requests for training and capacity-building from developing countries and countries in transition.

15. The recurrent calls from the General Assembly to Member States to resume or increase their voluntary contributions have not yielded encouraging results. It is particularly disappointing that industrialized countries have not resumed their contributions, while their participation in UNITAR programmes has increased rather dramatically over the past decade from 13 per cent to 29 per cent.[2] During its fortieth session, held in May 2002, the UNITAR Board of Trustees established a committee of six Board members to assist the Executive Director in the UNITAR fund-raising campaign. It is hoped that this will yield tangible results.

Rental and maintenance costs of UNITAR premises

16. As regards paragraphs 11 and 12 of resolution 56/208, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide clarification and proposals concerning rental rates and maintenance costs charged to UNITAR, a separate report has been issued in document A/57/479.

III. Conclusion

17. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.**